UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/AC.51/1991/5
11 April 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND COORDINATION
Thirty-first session
13 May-7 June 1991
Item 3 (d) of the provisional agenda*

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS: EVALUATION

Implementation of the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the evaluation of the programmes on development issues and policies

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The present report is submitted in accordance with the decision of the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its twenty-ninth session to examine the implementation of its recommendations based on its review of the report on the in-depth evaluation of the programme on development issues and policies at that session.

The report reviews the extent to which the recommendations concerning the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs and the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development have been implemented. It concludes that, although the recommendations addressed to those two Departments have not been fully implemented, progress has been made towards their implementation.

* E/AC.51/1991/1.

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INTRODUCTION

1. At its twenty-ninth session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination reviewed the in-depth evaluation study of the programmes on development issues and policies (E/AC.51/1989/4, Add.1, Add.1/Corr.1, Add.2 and Add.2/Corr.1). The Committee requested that the review of the programmes, which would examine the extent to which the recommendations of the Committee made at that session had been implemented, should be undertaken at its thirty-first session, rather than at its thirty-second session, in 1992, as originally scheduled. 1/

2. Also at its twenty-ninth session, the Committee agreed with the general thrust of recommendation 1 of the evaluation study concerning the programme of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs and took note of other recommendations on the programme. 2/ With respect to the recommendations on the programme of the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development, the Committee approved those contained in subparagraphs 73 (a) and (b) of the evaluation study and took note of the rest of the recommendations. 3/ Concerning the programme of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Committee requested that an in-depth evaluation of that programme be submitted to the Committee at its thirty-first sesssion (see E/AC.51/1991/3). 4/

3. The evaluation study's recommendation on the programme of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, which the Committee agreed with, was related to the level of representation at the Economic and Social Council. Other recommendations, which the Committee took note of, were concerned with the following issues: a proposal for specialized intergovernmental guidance on the programme; measures to increase the Department's contribution to the world professional debate on the global economy by means of upgrading the Journal of Development Planning and increasing the reviews of United Nations system publications in that field; a strategy for improving coverage of the Department's activities and publications; coordination with other Secretariat units in research and policy analysis; distribution of the Department's publications; and feedback from end-users.

4. The Committee approved the evaluation study's recommendations related to the re-examination of the role of the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development in providing assistance in the field of development issues and policies, support of technical cooperation among developing countries, and assistance to Governments in strengthening their capacity for project execution. The Committee took note of the recommendations on the development of an overall strategy for technical assistance and the reformulation of programme 2, as required; staff requirements and training; strengthening of research and analysis functions of the Department in that area; technical backstopping and application of the lessons learned; monitoring and evaluation of projects; local subcontracting; dissemination of information; and cooperation with other agencies and strengthening of the linkages between activities in development planning and those in public finance and statistics.

The Committee also took note of the evaluation study's recommendations addressed to the United Nations management, namely, on the policies relating to procurement for projects and project support costs.

5. The present report has been prepared in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee at its twenty-ninth session. The report attempts to determine the extent to which the recommendations of the study, which had been approved by the Committee, have been implemented. The implementation of other recommendations of the study concerning the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, which the Committee had taken note of, has also been examined. However, since they were not endorsed by the Committee, findings from the examination are given for information only. As to the recommendations concerning the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development, the present report does not discuss the implementation of recommendations of which the Committee had taken note. This is because there will be significant changes, starting 1 January 1992, in the manner in which technical assistance will be provided by the United Nations system for development (see paras. 43-45 below), and therefore many of those recommendations may soon lose their relevance. The methods of information collection for the present report included questionnaires addressed to the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs and the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development, documentation review, and interviews with staff members of those Departments, the Department of Public Information, the Department of Conference Services and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

I. PROGRAMME 1. DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

A. Recommendations approved by the Committee for Programme and Coordination

Representation at the Economic and Social Council

6. Recommendation 1 of the evaluation study (E/AC.51/1989/4) stated: "The Economic and Social Council should, when considering major issues of global economic concern, meet at a sufficiently high political level, preferably ministerial, as suggested by the Secretary-General in his reports on the work of the Organization for 1987 and 1988". The Committee agreed with the general thrust of that recommendation and recommended that the Council discuss the matter in the context of its revitalization. 5/

7. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1988/77, decided that it should undertake annually in-depth discussions of previously identified major policy themes. In its decision 1990/205, the Council decided that the theme for 1991 should be the impact of the recent evolution of East-West relations on the growth of the world economy, in particular on the economic growth and development of the developing countries, as well as on international economic cooperation. The Council further decided that the

discussion of the theme should be at a special meeting, at an appropriately high level, not excluding the ministerial level, to be held on 4 and 5 July 1991, during the second regular session of the Council. In that connection, the Secretary-General made the following statement in September 1990:

> "As the work of the Security Council demonstrates a new sense of purpose and a fresh determination to protect and promote peace, one should like to see a similar development in the Economic and Social Council. In this context, I welcome the decision of the Council to consider the implications of the evolution of the East-West relations for the world economy, and in particular the developing countries, at a high-level special meeting next year. I have consistently maintained that high-level and more focused meetings of the Council on important policy questions and developments will have a positive impact on the role and functioning of this body. A revitalized Council, meeting at ministerial level, could provide the framework for evolving economic and social policy guidelines which contribute to the process of promoting stability based on balanced economic development and social justice." 6/

8. By the same decision, the Council established, on a provisional basis, a multi-year work programme for the in-depth consideration of major policy themes during the period 1992-1994, which would be considered in the context of a special high-level meeting of the Council. 7/ In its resolution 1990/68, on the special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council in 1991, the Council invited the Secretary-General to prepare an analytical report for that meeting, which should, inter alia, include complete information on patterns of trade, financial flows and investments in the context of the recent evolution of East-West relations and its consequences for the developing countries. The Department of International Economic and Social Affairs was designated by the Secretary-General as the lead agency to prepare the analytical report under its programme on development issues and policies. One chapter of the 1991 World Economic Survey will also be devoted to the major theme for 1991. In the same resolution, the Council invited the Committee for Development Planning, at its twenty-seventh session, in April 1991, to make a contribution to the special high-level meeting, taking into account its programme of work. With the financial assistance of the Government of the Netherlands, the Department arranged to have a series of studies on various aspects related to the 1991 major theme prepared by consultants. Those studies are to serve as background information for the Committee's deliberation of the 1991 major theme.

9. The General Assembly, in its resolution 45/182 concerning the special high-level meeting, invited all Member States and observer States that are in a position to do so to be represented at the ministerial level.

10. In its resolution 45/177 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, the General Assembly decided to reconvene, in a resumed session for a duration of one week in the second half of April 1991, for an in-depth consideration and negotiations of

proposals for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields. At the time the present report was drafted, the provisional agenda for the resumed session had not yet been prepared. However, it is possible that the issue of high-level representation at the Economic and Social Council will be discussed at the resumed session of the General Assembly.

B. Recommendations taken note of by the Committee for Programme and Coordination

1. Specialized intergovernmental guidance

11. Recommendation 2 of the evaluation study stated: "The Economic and Social Council should provide the specialized intergovernmental guidance that the programme has lacked by reviewing the planning aspects of the programme".

12. The issue of providing specialized intergovernmental guidance to the programme on development issues and policies of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs has never been placed on the agenda of any intergovernmental body. Consequently, the chapter on the programme in the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 was presented to the Committee without prior review by an intergovernmental body. 8/ The draft medium-term plan was, however, submitted to the Committee for Development Planning for comments at its twenty-sixth session, in 1990. 9/ Considering that the programme is expected to provide support to the Council's deliberation on major policy themes, both directly and through the Committee for Development Planning, the recommendation of the evaluation study appears to be still valid.

2. Measures to increase the Department's contribution to the world professional debate on the global economy

13. The evaluation study recommended that the programme endeavour to make a greater contribution to the world professional debate on the problems and development of the global economy (recommendation 3). Measures suggested for that purpose were:

(a) To upgrade the Journal of Development Planning to a regularly issued periodical and to use it as a vehicle for disseminating relevant analyses by scholars, as well as United Nations analyses, to professionals in all regions of the world concerned with global economic development;

(b) To establish and maintain contact with editors of the major professional journals of economic policy, and actively encourage reviews of United Nations system publications on the economic and social aspects of international development as they affected the global economy.

14. The periodicity of the Journal of Development Planning has been regularized as one issue a year, starting with the biennium 1990-1991; the targeted issuing date is the fourth quarter of each year. However, the factors that made it difficult in the past to keep a specific target date still persist. For example, the majority of articles are commissioned by the Department from professionals outside the United Nations in order to provide wider perspectives; this sometimes causes delays in assembling all the manuscripts for a particular issue. Furthermore, in recent years each issue of the Journal has been edited by an expert or experts in the field that is the featured topic of the issue. Two of the three most recent issues (on entrepreneurship and human development) have been edited by professionals outside the United Nations. Another factor is the time taken to identify the appropriate topic to be featured. The Department maintains that, since the Journal is not a current survey, failure to keep the specific issuing date would not decrease its value, and that it is more important to produce high-quality work and topics of greater relevance than to issue the Journal on time if that means sacrifice of quality. The information given in tables 1 and 2 of annex I to the present report indicates, however, that the problems examined in the in-depth evaluation still persist.

15. Data contained in the published studies of the Department in response to mandates given by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council are necessarily in aggregate form. To disseminate information on technical details and methodological issues, on which the final outputs are based, the Department started the DIESA Working Paper Series in 1986. In 1990, it launched the DIESA Occasional Papers, the purpose of which is to disseminate informal papers (prepared by professionals both inside and outside the United Nations) relating to the issues of concern to the General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies and also having intrinsic value for the work of the Department, including LINK projections and reports of the working groups of the Committee for Development Planning (see also para. 23 below). These series can be issued for immediate release as soon as suitable materials become available.

16. Under the programme, the Department prepared a report entitled "Overall socio-economic perspective of the world economy to the year 2000 (A/43/554), which was chosen for the 1988 Notable Documents List by the Government Documents Round Table of the American Library Association. Because of that award and since the subjects of the report are of far-ranging interest, the Sales Section of the Department of Conference Services decided to adapt the final report on the subject 10/ to make it more attractive to the general public. To that end, the Sales Section had it re-edited for commercial publishing and typeset, and published it under the new title Global Outlook 2000 in June 1990. 11/ The issuance of a "commercial version" increased the demand for the report. Compared to the regular sales edition, 10/ which sold 500 copies, the sales figures for the commercial version are much higher. As at 1 February 1991, 5,200 out of 10,000 printed copies have been sold, with about 30 university-level courses having adopted it as one of the textbooks. The Sales Section of the Department of Conference Services will continue its efforts to have the book adopted as a textbook and sees the potential for a second edition. The title is well received. For

example, in the April 1991 issue of Choice magazine, it was stated that the book was a required item in any library collection. With the assistance of the United Nations University, the United Nations is in the process of identifying a commercial publisher to publish the Japanese edition. (Since 1983, the Japanese Foreign Ministry has been translating and publishing the World Economic Survey. The Government of the Republic of Korea has also had the Survey translated into Korean for the past two years. The rights have recently been given to a publisher in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to issue the publication in Russian.) In addition to being United Nations sales publications, a recent issue of the Journal of Development Planning (on human development in the 1980s and beyond) has also been published by a commercial publisher and another issue (on economic reforms in centrally planned economies and their impact on the global economy) 12/ is in press by the same publisher. The feasibility of issuing a commercial version of the World Economic Survey in the manner of the Global Outlook 2000 is being studied by the Department and the Sales Section.

17. Another factor in reaching a wider audience is affordability. The sales price for all language editions of the World Economic Survey is $US 45, which is too expensive for many potential users in developing countries. The college textbook market is also very price sensitive. Therefore, the Sales Section is currently exploring effective ways to address these problems. This may include possible arrangements for publishers in different regions to publish and distribute the Survey. In overhauling its mailing lists for free distribution, the Department is paying particular attention to identifying relevant universities, research institutions and libraries in developing countries (see para. 28). The Department considers that making some of its publications more readable and accessible to professionals outside the United Nations and to university students would increase its contribution to the world professional debate on the problems and development of the global economy, and so is responsive to recommendation 3 of the evaluation. It is too soon to expect the effects of these actions to be evident.

18. With respect to the recommendation of the evaluation study concerning the need to encourage reviews of the Department's publications, the Department is in the process of identifying editors of relevant economic periodicals and media as part of its exercise for overhauling its mailing lists (see para. 28).

3. Measures to publicize the Department's work

19. The evaluation study suggested several measures for publicizing the programme's findings on the global economy and for assessing the media coverage of its activities (recommendation 4). They included:
(a) collaboration with the Department of Public Information in arranging regular round-table discussions with a wide range of journalists specializing in economic matters; and (b) use of newspaper clippings and databases to review and assess media coverage of the programme's outputs. The evaluation study further recommended that the programme develop a strategy for improving coverage of its activities and publications and incorporate that strategy in its medium-term plan.

20. The importance of the media in disseminating information was also recognized by the Statistical Commission at its twenty-sixth session. In its deliberation of the item on increasing user awareness of the value of statistical outputs and services, the Commission concluded that the media was, in many developed and developing countries, a major means by which statistical information was communicated to many people and organizations. 13/ Being aware of the usefulness of the media, the Secretariat has in recent years increased its efforts to disseminate its findings on global economy through the media. For example, summaries of reports prepared by the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs on the eradication of poverty in developing countries (A/44/467) and on the external debt crisis and development (A/44/628) have been included in press kits distributed world wide by the Department of Public Information. Press conferences are now held annually for the World Economic Survey at the opening of the Economic and Social Council at Geneva, and in New York in September for the update of the Survey and in December for an end-year note on the world economy. In late June 1990, a press conference on the Survey was held in New York. The Department of Public Information considers that having a press conference in New York seems to have increased the media coverage of the Survey.

21. Press releases on major publications of the United Nations, including the Survey, are now sent to a number of United Nations Information Centres through the electronic mail service, which allows the transmission of information in a cost-effective and expeditious way, without losing the "newsworthiness" of the findings of current surveys such as the World Economic Survey. However, for chiefly technical reasons, only 21 out of 67 United Nations Information Centres are currently linked electronically with Headquarters. Wider linkage of the Centres may lead to wider media coverage of United Nations publications in the future. Press clippings collected from a selected number of Centres show extensive reporting on the contents of the Survey for 1990 in 13 countries. The collected press clippings totalled 51 from 14 countries. The collection was by no means comprehensive, except perhaps in Brazil where the Rio de Janeiro Centre used a commercial press clipping service, which collected 13 articles on the Survey; it is likely that there has been more reporting on the Survey. The Department of Public Information plans to request all Centres to collect systematically press clippings on the Survey for 1991.

22. On the occasion of the publication of the 1990 World Economic Survey and Global Outlook 2000, the Sales Section of the Department of Conference Services organized a meeting in New York in June 1990 in cooperation with the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs and the Department of Public Information. About 25 journalists from major newspapers and broadcasting stations were present and discussions were held with senior staff members of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs. The Department of Public Information has received indications from some of the attending journalists and United Nations Information Centres that the meeting helped increase the media coverage of the publications. However, such special round-table discussions with a wide range of journalists specializing in economic matters have not been held on a regular basis partly because of

financial reasons. Instead, representatives of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs participated in more general press conferences concerning economic matters, for example, at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly. Staff of the Department also participated in about a dozen press, radio and television interviews, including the programme "World Chronicle", in 1990.

23. The Committee for Development Planning was also concerned with the need to increase awareness of its work. At its twenty-sixth session, in 1990, the Committee agreed that the effectiveness of its work could be enhanced by greater outreach. It suggested that selective efforts be made to improve the dissemination of its reports. The measures suggested include systematic contacts with economic journalists and selected non-governmental organizations, use of United Nations Information Centres, a cycle of international seminars on development issues related to the Committee's ongoing work, issuing the reports of its working groups as DIESA Occasional Papers, and entrusting the interregional advisers of the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development and the resident representatives of the United Nations Development Programme with the task of drawing the attention of decision makers at the national level to the work of the Committee. 14/ In response to the Committee's decisions, several steps have been or are planned to be taken to increase the awareness of the Committee's work. An annual publication entitled Views and Recommendations of the Committee for Development Planning will be sent to economic journalists and selected non-governmental organizations once the Department's new mailing lists are completed. The Department intends to issue the reports of the Committee's working groups and other background studies as DIESA Occasional Papers. A symposium on economic reform in Eastern Europe was held at The Hague from 20 to 22 February 1991 under the auspices of the Committee.

24. The development and implementation of effective strategies for improving coverage of the Department's activities and publications, as well as for increasing the dissemination of information on global economy, requires concerted efforts by the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, the Department of Public Information and the Sales Section. Collaboration among these three entities has increased in recent years; the new measures described above have been taken or are being explored. After a period of trial and error, it is desirable for the entities concerned to develop explicit overall strategies for dissemination and promotion, and to introduce them as revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, as envisaged in recommendation 4.

4. Coordination in research and policy analysis

25. The evaluation study recommended that efforts to improve coordination in research and policy analysis continue to be strengthened (recommendation 5). It further suggested that Secretariat units cite one another's work in order to help readers of one United Nations survey understand the relationship of the analysis they are reading to other analyses.

26. A number of steps have been taken to establish close coordination between the Department and other entities. For example, in 1989, memoranda of understanding were signed between the Department and the regional commissions, providing for, inter alia, consultations on outlines and drafts, exchange of data and information, exchange of biennial work programmes, and joint studies and seminars. Collaboration with other entities has also increased. One example is the joint efforts with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in preparing sections of chapters III and IX of the World Economic Survey, 1990. A review of the surveys issued by the Department, the regional commissions and UNCTAD in 1990 indicates some increase in cross-citation compared to the practices in 1987 described in the evaluation report (see annex II) below.

5. Distribution of publications and feedback from users

27. The evaluation study recommended that the mailing lists for free distribution be systematically derived from major categories of users (recommendation 6). They should include at least one specialized focal point in each Member State, central banks, economic policy institutes, UNDP resident coordinators, United Nations Information Centres, members of the specialized economic press and editors of key economic journals, and they should be updated every quarter. It also recommended that a self-evaluation be undertaken, prior to the review by the Committee for Programme and Coordination of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, in order to seek the views of end-users on the overall quality and usefulness of its publications, their format and content, the audiences to be targeted, and the best vehicles for reaching those audiences.

28. The Department has been mailing copies of the World Economic Survey to key policy makers in Member States as well as to important academic institutions. This has elicited positive responses from Governments that have found the analysis and information useful. For example, a few Governments have translated the Survey into their national languages (see para. 16 above). The Department is also in the process of preparing a comprehensive system of new mailing lists for free distribution. In this connection, the Department will be working closely with the Department of Public Information, which is computerizing its world-wide mailing lists. During this exercise, which is expected to be completed by June 1991, general and customized mailing lists will be prepared. The Department intends to send all publications to those on the general list, that is, senior officials of Governments (financial and/or planning ministries), permanent missions, organizations of the United Nations system and major intergovernmental organizations; United Nations resident coordinators/UNDP resident representatives; United Nations Information Centres; and United Nations associations. Executive summaries will be prepared for policy makers. Those on customized mailing lists will receive selected publications depending on their areas of interest. The categories of recipients include research organizations and universities; libraries; media and economic periodicals; non-governmental organizations; and

officials at the working level in Governments, the United Nations system and other major intergovernmental organizations. A professional staff member in the inter-agency section of the Department will be in charge of updating and maintaining the mailing lists.

29. Several members of the Statistical Commission noted that the primary condition for promoting awareness was that the outputs should be of adequate quality and meet user needs. 15/ To assess user needs, the Department plans to send a brief questionnaire to those on the new mailing lists.

30. The self-evaluation exercise of the programme on development issues and policies was not completed prior to the review by the Committee for Programme and Coordination of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. However, in October 1990, the Department sent a questionnaire on the World Economic Survey to 130 representatives on, or observers to, the Second Committee of the General Assembly. Thirty-one replies were received. A preliminary analysis of the responses suggests that the Survey is considered useful, but more timely distribution is necessary. The Department also learned that there was room for improvement in the content and overall quality of the Survey. Topics suggested for future issues will be given due consideration by the Department. Because of the low response rate, the Department intends to collect more information from delegations. In December 1990, the Department sent a similar questionnaire to each of the Permanent Missions in New York concerning the Overall Socio-economic Perspective of the World Economy to the Year 2000. 16/ By 28 February 1991, 14 replies had been received. Because of the low response rate, it is not possible to make any definitive judgements. However, the document appears to be useful since almost all of the respondents used it as background information for the preparation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade and for the forty-fifth session of the General Assemmbly. Almost half also used it as background information for the second regular session of 1990 of the Economic and Social Council. The overall quality of the document was rated as "good" by the majority of the respondents. Several respondents recommended additional topics to be included in future studies of this type and/or additional emphasis on certain concerns of developing countries.

II. PROGRAMME 2. DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

A. Recommendations approved by the Committee for Programme and Coordination

1. Role of the Department

31. In paragraph 73 (a) of the evaluation study (E/AC.51/1989/4/Add.1 and Corr.1), it was recommended that the Department continue to examine its role in the field of development issues and policies and identify areas for which its Development Planning Advisory Branch is most suited to provide assistance and enhance the required expertise. The Committee approved the

recommendations on the understanding that their implementation would enhance coordination among organizations of the United Nations system and would lead to better fulfilment of the existing mandate of the Department in the field. 17/

32. In its decision 90/37, the Governing Council of UNDP requested the Administrator to report to the Governing Council at its thirty-eighth session, in 1991, on the results of the efforts of UNDP and the Department to establish a more effective division of labour and a more effective complementary relationship, and to devise ways and means of eliminating duplicative administrative support activities and strengthening technical support activities. 18/ As of February 1991, the Department was still in the process of consulting with UNDP on these matters. The results of the consultations will be reported to the Governing Council at its thirty-eighth session in June 1991. The consultations are expected to contribute to the implementation of the Committee's recommendation.

33. With respect to the identification of areas for which its Development Planning Advisory Branch is most suited to provide assistance, the Department states that the Branch is particularly strong in the following areas: (a) comprehensive development planning, (b) aid coordination, (c) regional and other subnational development planning, (d) public sector planning and management information systems, and (e) macroeconomic models for specific groups of countries. A self-evaluation report prepared by the Branch in 1987 categorized the operationally active projects in that year. They are, in order of magnitude in terms of number: (a) development planning and policies, (b) regional and other subnational planning, (c) grass-roots projects, (d) aid coordination, and (e) public investment database projects. Therefore, there has not been a significant change since 1987 in the areas in which the Branch is considered strong.

2. Support of technical cooperation among developing countries

34. The evaluation study recommended, in paragraph 73 (b), that the Department augment its efforts in support of technical cooperation among developing countries, and that such augmentation be incorporated in the next medium-term plan and subsequent programme budgets. The Committee approved that recommendation. 19/

35. Subprogramme 2 of the programme in the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 (extended to 1991) is exclusively concerned with technical support for technical cooperation among developing countries. In the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, which followed a somewhat different methodology than the previous plan, there is no specific subprogramme on technical cooperation among developing countries. Subprogramme 9 (Integrated development planning and policies) of programme 12 (Global development issues and policies) states that consideration of TCDC modalities of cooperation will be made whenever appropriate. 20/

36. In the programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989, extrabudgetary resources in the amount of $168,500 (5 per cent of programme total) were estimated as expenditures for the purpose of strengthening technical cooperation among developing countries under section 7 (Department of Technical Cooperation for Development). 21/ For the same purpose, extrabudgetary resources in the amount of $302,800 (10.0 per cent of programme total) were expected for the biennium 1990-1991. 22/ If those expectations are fulfilled, the Department will have augmented its efforts in support of technical cooperation among developing countries. The subprogramme had one output (a technical publication) for each biennium; the technical publication for the biennium 1988-1989, reviewing experiences gained by developing countries in technical cooperation in the fields of development planning and plan implementation, which was scheduled for completion in the second quarter of 1989, is now expected to be available for distribution in the second quarter of 1991.

37. Under section 24 (Regular programme of technical cooperation), the Department held two interregional workshops in support of technical cooperation among developing countries in the biennium 1988-1989. The workshops focused on planning of financial resources for development and national experience in achieving far-reaching social and economic changes. For the biennium 1990-1991, the Department held two interregional workshops: on computerized data banks and information systems for planning and monitoring public sector investment programmes and coordinating international financial and technical cooperation, in 1990; and on new approaches in regional (subnational) planning, in early 1991. Two other workshops are also in preparation for the remainder of 1991 and early 1992: one on social monitoring of adjustment processes and its use in economic management, and the other on promoting accelerated development in Africa: perspectives from the Asian experience.

38. The report of the Administrator of UNDP, which was based on a survey of the progress made in the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries by the organizations of the United Nations system (TCDC/6/2 and Corr.1 and 2, Add.1, Add.2 and Corr.1 and Add.3 and Corr.1), was submitted to the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries at its sixth session, held in September 1989. The Administrator drew the following general conclusions:

> "The reports of the organizations show that progress in varying degrees continues to be made in the implementation of TCDC. However, as in the past, most organizations have not succeeded in overcoming their internal procedural constraints that would enable them to substantiate and document this progress in financial and statistical terms. This appears to be due, in part, to the fact that most organizations continue to have difficulties to define clearly what are and what are not promotional and operational TCDC activities, and in part to the fact that most organizations do not seem to keep on a continuous basis separate financial and statistical records even of those TCDC activities that they have clearly identified" (TCDC/6/2, para. 17).

Thus, it is difficult to determine the extent to which the Department contributed to technical cooperation among developing countries. However, UNDP records indicate that the Department is giving increasing attention to the support and promotion of technical cooperation among developing countries in its programme of technical cooperation.

39. In compliance with paragraph 15 of decision 6/3 of the High-level Committee, the Administrator convened a meeting of governmental experts in New York from 9 to 20 April 1990 in order to identify clearly the impediments to technical cooperation among developing countries and changes to be introduced, so as to enable the incorporation of technical cooperation among developing countries into all programmes and projects financed by the United Nations system, and to recommend, as far as possible, revisions of the existing rules, regulations and procedures necessary for that purpose by the relevant governing bodies of the technical cooperation agencies of the United Nations system. The governmental experts made a number of recommendations for action both at the governmental level and by the United Nations system (DP/1990/77, annex, paras. 35-70). The report of the meeting will be reviewed by the High-level Committee at its seventh session, to be held immediately before the thirty-eighth session of the Governing Council of UNDP in June 1991. The decisions of the High-level Committee and the Governing Council on the recommendations of the governmental experts are expected to have significant effect on the way the activities of the United Nations system in support of technical cooperation among developing countries will be carried out.

3. Assistance to Governments in strengthening their capacity for project execution

40. In paragraph 73 (b) of the evaluation study, it was recommended that the Department continue to assist Governments in strengthening their capacity for project execution and at the same time enhance the capacity of the Development Planning Advisory Branch to introduce new concepts of planning and to transfer new techniques in support of planning (E/AC.51/1989/4/Add.1 and Corr.1). The Committee approved those recommendations. 19/

41. In theory, all technical cooperation projects should contribute to the strengthening of the technical capacity of Governments. However, a desk review of evaluation reports on development strategies, policies and planning, undertaken by UNDP in 1990, found that a majority of the projects had fallen far short of their targets when judged against self-reliance in development planning, although many outputs, such as the medium-term plan, training of nationals in planning methodology, macroeconomic analysis, project selection and evaluation and monitoring, were found to be useful by the Governments assisted. 23/

42. Concerning assistance provided under the regular programme of technical cooperation, the Department carried out about 30 advisory missions during the second half of 1989, with a view to improving developing countries' development planning systems and policies in support of national development.

These advisory missions, as well as those undertaken in 1990, were for the purpose of strengthening the technical capacity of Governments. The missions also made contributions, either directly or indirectly, to the strengthening of the capacity of Governments for project execution. It is not, however, possible to determine the extent of the contribution of the missions because their indirect effects are difficult to measure. In response to the Committee's recommendation on the need to enhance the Branch's capacity to introduce new concepts and techniques of planning, the Department intends to carry out operationally oriented research in the next medium-term plan period; this proposal is incorporated in the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997.

43. The Governing Council of UNDP, in decision 89/20, stressed that government execution should be the ultimate modality for all UNDP-supported projects. 24/ Similarly, the General Assembly, in resolution 44/211, recognized the need to reorient operational activities in order to strengthen and utilize fully national capacities in all aspects of the programme and project cycle. In the same resolution, the Assembly decided that a number of changes should be undertaken in order fully to enable Governments to assume the execution of programmes and projects funded by the United Nations system for development. In response to those decisions, the Administrator of UNDP proposed that all UNDP technical cooperation activities financed from country indicative planning figures (IPFs) initiated on or after 1 January 1992 should be nationally executed (DP/1990/33, para. 10). In its decision 90/21, the Governing Council of UNDP recognized the responsibility of the recipient Governments, in agreement with the Administrator, to determine the modality and manner of execution and implementation, and that the fifth cycle commencement and the introduction of successor arrangements for agency support costs, 1 January 1992, would provide an opportunity to pursue and accelerate vigorously the process of the national execution of UNDP-assisted projects and programmes. 25/

44. In response to Governing Council decision 90/26 on agency support costs, the Administrator of UNDP has made proposals concerning technical services support facilities which will be in effect from 1 January 1992 (see DP/1991/7). The Department, which is one of the five largest executing agencies, is designated by decision 90/26 to be subject to the new support cost arrangement.

45. The recent decisions of the Governing Council of UNDP on national execution and on agency support costs, as well as the relevant decisions the Council is expected to take in June 1991, would have profound effects on the work of the Department since more than 75 per cent of its activities are currently financed from IPFs. The decisions would also affect technical cooperation among developing countries. Since Governments would become responsible for deciding the modality of project execution, and agencies would be compensated for their assistance not from the project budget but from technical services support facilities, agencies would not be faced with conflicting interests when considering the incorporation of technical cooperation among developing countries in projects.

B. Recommendations taken note of by the Committee for Programme and Coordination

46. The Committee took note of the following recommendations contained in the evaluation study: (a) the need for developing an overall strategy for technical assistance; (b) staff requirements and training; (c) strengthening of the research and analysis functions of the Department in the field of development issues and policies; (d) technical backstopping and application of the lessons learned; (e) monitoring and evaluation of projects; (f) local subcontracting; (g) dissemination of information; (h) cooperation with other agencies and strengthening of the linkages between activities in development planning and those in public finance and statistics; and (i) the policies relating to procurement for projects and project support costs. 26/ As stated in paragraphs 43 and 44 above, with the introduction of successor arrangements for agency support costs in January 1992, all the technical assistance (excluding assistance in connection with projects approved before 1 January 1992) provided by the Department will be compensated from technical services support facilities and, in principle, all UNDP technical cooperation activities financed from IPFs will be nationally executed. This requires changes in the procedures under which technical assistance is provided by the Department. It may also result in changes in types and areas of assistance, which in turn would have an effect on staff requirements. Therefore, many of the above-mentioned recommendations may soon lose their relevance. The Department may still need to consider implementing some of the recommendations (e.g., the development of overall strategy for technical assistance, staff requirements and cooperation with other agencies), but they will need to be addressed in a different context.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

1. Department of International Economic and Social Affairs

47. Recommendation 1 of the evaluation study on the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs concerned the level of representation at the Economic and Social Council (E/AC.51/1989/4, para. 97). The Council decided, in 1990, to have a special high-level meeting annually to undertake in-depth discussions of major policy themes. In that connection, the Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the organization, issued in September 1990, stated: "A revitalized Council, meeting at ministerial level, could provide the framework for evolving economic and social policy guidelines which contribute to the process of promoting stability based on balanced economic development and social justice". 27/

48. The Committee took note of recommendation 2 of the study, which suggested that the Council provide specialized intergovernmental guidance to the programme on development issues and policies being carried out by the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs. That recommendation, although it appears to be still valid, has not been implemented.

49. The Committee also took note of recommendations 3, 4 and 6 of the evaluation study, which are related to the need for increasing outreach by the Secretariat. Progress has been made in raising awareness of the work of the Department, contributing to the world professional debate on the development of the global economy, in disseminating information on the global economy through the media and in reaching potential users. In doing so, cooperation between the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs and the Department of Public Information and the Sales Section of the Department of Conference Services has increased in recent years. The Committee also took note of recommendation 5 on the need to improve coordination in research and policy analysis. Efforts have been made to implement this recommendation; cooperation between the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs and the regional commissions, IMF, UNCTAD and other organizations has increased in recent years.

50. Raising awareness of the work of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs is important. However, as several members of the Statistical Commission noted, the first condition for promoting awareness was that the outputs should be of adequate quality and meet user needs; hence, the importance of feedback from users. Recommendation 6 of the evaluation study includes proposals concerning feedback from users. Although that recommendation has not been fully implemented, efforts have begun on its implementation. For example, in 1990, the Department carried out a self-evaluation exercise of its major publications, the World Economic Survey and the Overall Socio-economic Perspective of the World Economy to the Year 2000.

2. Department of Technical Cooperation for Development

51. Many of the evaluation study's recommendations concerning the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development have been overtaken by recent developments, namely, the decision of the Governing Council of UNDP designating the Department as one of the agencies to be subject to the new support cost arrangement, starting from 1 January 1992 (decision 90/26), and that recognizing the responsibility of recipient Governments to determine the modality and manner of execution and implementation of programmes and projects (decision 90/21). Those decisions are expected to result in reorientation of the operational activities of the United Nations system.

52. Three recommendations approved by the Committee concern the re-examination of the role of the Department, support of technical cooperation among developing countries, and assistance to Governments in strengthening their capacity for project execution. Although those recommendations have not been fully implemented, efforts have been made towards their implementation. Furthermore, the above-mentioned decisions of the Governing Council of UNDP are expected to have significant effect on the implementation of those recommendations.

B. Recommendation

53. The Committee may wish to take note of the efforts at implementation made to date.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/44/16), para. 319.

2/ Ibid., paras. 289-290.

3/ Ibid., para. 292.

4/ Ibid., para. 294.

5/ Ibid., para. 289.

6/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No.1 (A/45/1), pp. 13-14.

7/ In its decision 1990/205, the Economic and Social Council established the following indicative multi-year work programme for the in-depth consideration of major policy themes during the period 1992-1994:

1992

The international trade system and its impact on the development of the developing countries;

Eradication of poverty in the developing countries, including the impact of structural adjustment programmes on vulnerable groups;

1993

Environment and development;

Population, development and socio-economic indicators;

1994

Technology and industrialization in the development process of the developing countries;

International cooperation against illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution of narcotic drugs.

8/ Programme 12 (Global development issues and policies), major programme IV (International economic cooperation for development).

Notes (continued)

9/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1990, Supplement No.7 (E/1990/27 and Corr.1), para. 164.

10/ Overall Socio-economic Perspective of the World Economy to the Year 2000 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.90.II.C.2).

11/ Global Outlook 2000 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.90.II.C.30).

12/ Journal of Development Planning, Nos. 19 and 20 (United Nations publications, Sales Nos. E.89.II.A.2 and E.90.II.A.9).

13/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1991, Supplement No. 5 (E/1991/25), para. 8.

14/ Ibid., Supplement No.7 (E/1990/27 and Corr.1), para. 156.

15/ Ibid., 1991, Supplement No. 5 (E/1991/25), para. 6.

16/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.90.II.C.2.

17/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/44/16), para. 292 (b).

18/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1990, Supplement No. 9 (E/1990/29), annex I.

19/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/44/16), para. 292 (c).

20/ "Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997: Major programme IV. International economic cooperation for development; Programme 12. Global development issues and policies" (A/45/6 (Prog. 12)), para. 12.81.

21/ "Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989: Part IV. Economic, social and humanitarian activities; Section 7. Department of Technical Cooperation for Development" (A/42/6 (Sect. 7)), para. 7.18.

22/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/44/6/Rev.1), vol. I, para. 7.11.

23/ UNDP Central Evaluation Office, "Notes on UNDP's experience in development planning assistance", 9 October 1990.

24/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1989, Supplement No. 13 (E/1989/32), annex I.

Notes (continued)

25/ Ibid., 1990, Supplement No. 9 (E/1990/29), annex I.

26/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/44/16), para. 292 (a).

27/ Ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 1 (A/45/1), p. 14.

Annex I

PROFESSIONAL CITATION OF ARTICLES IN THE JOURNAL OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND COMPARATORS

Table 1. Items in a standard bibliography on theme topics a/ of the Journal of Development Planning, 1987-October 1990

Journal/compendium	Number of items cited in bibliography
Journals	
Journal of Development Planning	-
Finance and Development	54
IMF Staff Papers	14
CEPAL Review	11
Compendiums	
The international monetary system and its reform: papers prepared for the Group of Twenty-four through a United Nations project, 1970-1986	28
External debt savings and growth in Latin America: papers presented at a seminar sponsored by IMF and the Instituto Torcuato di Tella, Buenos Aires, 1986	10
The IMF and the World Bank in Africa: conditionality, impact and alternatives: seminar proceedings, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1987	15

Source: Economic Literature Index, DIALOG.

a/ The topics included the following: Entrepreneurship; international debt; and economic reforms in centrally planned economies.

Table 2. Citations of articles in the Journal of Development Planning and comparators

Journal	Total citations 1984-1987	Total citations 1988-1990 a/
Journal of Development Planning	25	14
CEPAL Review	64	50
IMF Staff Papers	573	401

Source: Social Science Citation Index.

a/ As at 30 November 1990.

Annex II

CITATION IN THE TEXTS OF REPORTS BY VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS, 1990

Table 3. Citation in the texts of surveys by various organizations, 1990: surveys only

Surveys in which citation occurs a/	Surveys cited (all years)				Total citations
	WES	TDR	ECE	ESCAP	
World Economic Survey, 1990	33	1	6	1	461
Trade and Development Report, 1990	-	16	1	-	183
Economic Survey of Europe, 1989-1990	5	1	42	-	996
Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific, 1989	2	7	-	34	238

a/ No surveys of ECA, ECLAC and ESCWA for 1989 or 1990 had been published at the time the present report was drafted.

Table 4. Citation in the texts of surveys by various organizations, 1990: all sources

Sources cited (All years)	Surveys in which citations occur a/			
	World Economic Survey, 1990	UNCTAD Trade and Development Report, 1990	Economic Survey of Europe, 1989-1990	Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific, 1989
World Economic Survey	33	-	5	2
Other DIESA reports and data	63	8	4	9
UNCTAD:				
TDR b/	1	16	1	7
Other	5	28	36	11
Reports of regional commissions:				
ECA	3	-	-	-
ECE	10	1	178	1
ECLAC	6	2	3	-
ESCWA	1	-	-	-
ESCAP	1	-	1	58
Reports of other United Nations units	16	3	2	5
Reports of the World Bank	24	5	3	14
Reports of the International Monetary Fund	27	15	26	18
All other	271	105	737	113
Total citations	461	183	996	238

a/ No surveys of ECA, ECLAC and ESCWA for 1989 or 1990 had been published at the time the present report was drafted.

b/ Trade and Development Report.